

VZCZCXRO3909
OO RUEHDT RUEHPB
DE RUEHKO #0291/01 0470253
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 160253Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9379
INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 0707
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA IMMEDIATE 8817
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA IMMEDIATE 1153
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE IMMEDIATE 2633
RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO IMMEDIATE 9307
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 000291

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/16/2020
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [KS](#) [KN](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: FM OKADA VISIT TO ROK

TOKYO 00000291 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: DCM James P. Zumwalt per 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C) Summary: FM Okada's February 10-11 visit to Seoul highlighted the "great shape" that bilateral relations are in, with FM Okada using the opportunity to offer a forward-leaning -- and well-received -- statement on Japan-ROK historical issues. MOFA Asia DG Saiki told us that this year, the 100th anniversary of Japan's annexation of Korea, will offer further opportunities for "sincere" Japanese statements on historical matters. FM Okada and his ROK counterpart discussed a wide range of issues, including their shared views on North Korean denuclearization, the importance of bilateral cooperation to address global issues -- including Okada's proposal to "cooperate" with the ROK's PRT in Afghanistan -- and a possible Economic Partnership Agreement. Notably, ROK FM Yu asked about the Futenma issue, to which Okada responded that PM Hatoyama had pledged a resolution by May. End Summary.

12. (C) Japan-ROK relations are in "great shape," Japanese FM Katsuya Okada and ROK FM Yu Myung-hwan agreed during Okada's February 10-11 visit to Seoul, MOFA Asia DG Akitaka Saiki told DCM February 15. Citing poll numbers in both countries that show a majority of Japanese and Koreans favorably view bilateral relations, Okada urged both sides to continue their efforts to improve ties, particularly in this sensitive year that marks the 100th anniversary of Japan's annexation of Korea. Okada met for 2 1/2 hours with FM Yu, and had a 30-minute courtesy call with President Lee Myung-bak. Garnering the most press attention in Japan was FM Okada's press conference with FM Yu, in which his forward-leaning statements on the annexation were generally well received in Japan, "even by the conservative Sankei Shimbun," Saiki observed. Okada acknowledged that the Japanese annexation of Korea "deeply hurt the pride of the Korean people." He added that the "pain of the victims should not be forgotten." According to Saiki, the Korean side had pressed for Okada to refer to the Korean "victims," and were pleased that Okada had done so.

North Korea

13. (C) On the DPRK and denuclearization, FM Okada and FM Yu agreed that there is no difference of views among Japan, the ROK and the United States, and Japan and South Korea continue to demand that North Korea return to the Six Party Talks without condition, Saiki said. There will be no compromise on the denuclearization issue, and Okada and Yu agreed that China should play a more active role. On conditions inside

North Korea, FM Yu shared the ROK view that there is a one-million-ton food shortage, the DPRK's distribution system is not functioning, the recent currency re-denomination was a total failure, food prices are increasing, and there is the very high possibility of mass starvation.

Relations with U.S.

14. (C) In response to the DCM's question, Saiki said that Okada noted that U.S., Japanese and ROK forces are present in Haiti, and this offered an opportunity for trilateral military cooperation. FM Yu had no substantive response. FM Yu raised the issue of Futenma relocation, to which Okada responded that PM Hatoyama had pledged to resolve the matter by May.

Bilateral Issues

15. (C) In addition to exchanging high-level visits for the APEC and G20 meetings later in the year, President Lee agreed in his meeting with Okada that a bilateral visit to Japan -- perhaps before the summer -- will be an important part of Japan-ROK shuttle diplomacy, Saiki related. The Japan-ROK-China trilateral summit on Jeju Island May 29 will also be an opportunity for PM Hatoyama to meet President Lee and to make a statement "consoling Korean feelings." Saiki said the DPJ government recognizes the need to shape perceptions in advance of sensitive dates in August 2010 related to the annexation anniversary, so political leadership is prepared to offer additional "sincere" statements on Japan-Korea historical issues. The issue of a possible Imperial visit to Korea did not come up in any of

TOKYO 00000291 002.2 OF 002

Okada's discussions. FM Yu noted that a number of Korean NGOs are demanding the return of several Korean historical documents currently in the possession of Japan's Imperial Household Agency. Okada responded that this matter requires careful examination, particularly in terms of the scope of cultural assets that might someday be returned to Korea.

16. (C) On an Economic Partnership Agreement, FM Okada expressed his desire to resume negotiations as soon as possible, and proposed to FM Yu that they "show leadership" by persuading their reluctant domestic constituencies. Saiki added that Okada is enthused about pursuing an EPA and is willing to take steps to address the doubts of fellow Cabinet members, such as Ag Minister Akamatsu, Saiki added. Turning to the subject of voting rights in local elections for permanent residents -- the majority of whom are ethnic Koreans -- FM Yu expressed his hope for the early passage of relevant legislation. FM Okada responded that views within his own ruling party, not to mention the coalition, remain divided and require "further coordination." "We need to lower Korean expectations," Saiki told the DCM.

Global Issues

17. (C) In light of the ROK's decision to send forces to a PRT in Afghanistan in July, FM Okada expressed Japan's intent to "cooperate," but Saiki said that it remained unclear when or how Japan would do this. Okada and Yu also agreed to increase bilateral cooperation in development assistance, climate change, nuclear nonproliferation/disarmament, counterterrorism and anti-piracy.

Comment

18. (C) Okada's characterization of Japan-ROK relations as being in "great shape" is consistent with what our ROK Embassy interlocutors have also told us. In a recent conversation with DCM, ROK Embassy DCM Lee Hyuck said that

the new DPJ government represents an opportunity to strengthen Japan-ROK ties. In fact, the only concern the ROKG has about the Hatoyama government is how it manages the U.S.-Japan relationship, Lee said.

ROOS